

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 9 have been amended. Claims 2 and 10 – 15 have been canceled. Claim 1 is the only independent claim that remains pending. Claims 12 – 15 have been canceled because it is Applicants' belief that the subject matter thereof is subsumed by Claim 1, as now amended.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 3 – 6 and 9 – 10 as being unpatentable under 35 USC 102(b) over US Patent No. 5,830,395 ("Vercesi et al.") Applicant has amended Claim 1 to limit the same to "A solidified article said article being hollow and being prepared by blow molding."

It is conceded that the thermoplastic compositions disclosed in Vercesi et al. include "short aramid fibers" having a length from 0.1 to 8 mm and an aspect ratio from "as little as 10 to as much as 1000 or perhaps slightly more." [col.2, lines 16 – 19] Because the aspect ratio is the ratio of length to diameter, Vercesi et al. contemplate using aramid fibers having a diameter from 0.1 microns (0.1 mm/1000) to 800 microns (8mm/10). The aramid fibers in Applicants' claims are limited to a maximum diameter of 150 microns, considerably less than that taught by Vercesi et al.

Applicants' concede that the aramid fibers of Example 1 of the Vercesi et al. reference, designated as "Kevlar®, merge 1F361", are identical to the aramid fibers contained in masterbatch M, designated as "Kevlar®, Merge 1K-1239" (at page 10, lines 21 – 26 of the instant specification) and used in Examples 1 and 2 of the present invention. Nevertheless, Vercesi et al. do not disclose or suggest the suitability of the composition for making blow molded hollow articles.

The Examiner has commented that little patentable weight is given to the method of making an article, such as by blow molding. The Examiner has further commented that the fact that the article is hollow has

not been given any patentable weight because it appears in the preamble. Patentable weight should be accorded to both limitations. Claim 1 as currently amended provides an express claim limitation that the article is both hollow and prepared by blow molding. It is only through Applicants' discovery that by precisely controlling the aramid fiber length, diameter and Canadian Standard Freeness, in combination and within the limits set forth in Claim 1, can the rheology of the thermoplastic composition be controlled in order that a superior quality blow molded hollow article can be obtained.

Once again, the Examiner's attention is directed to Example 4 (also referred to as Comparative Example C) at pages 14 and 15 of the instant specification. Example 4 was prepared in a manner identical to composition P1 of the invention *except that* CF2 masterbatch (that included 20% rod-like and nonfibrillated aramid fibers having a Canadian Standard Freeness greater than or equal to 700 ml) was substituted for masterbatch M (that included fibrillated aramid fibers having a Canadian Standard Freeness of about 215 ml). Example 4 exhibited a sag ratio of 0.56 whereas P1 exhibited a sag ratio of 0.73. Heretofore it was not known that aramid fibers, exhibiting maximum Canadian Standard Freeness of 500 ml, a length between 0.1 and 8 mm and a diameter less than 150 microns, when used in combination with a thermoplastic material, could raise the sag ratio to an unexpectedly high value. Clearly, this demonstrates the an unexpected result is obtained when thermoplastic compositions are combined with aramid fibers in accordance with the invention – i.e. that a superior quality blow molded hollow article can be obtained.

Accordingly, the Vercesi et al. reference fails to anticipate or render Applicants' Claim 1 obvious and it is respectfully requested that this basis for rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner has further rejected Claims 1, 3 - 8 and 9 - 14 as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 5,468,530 ("Gotz et al.") in view of Vercesi et al. under 35 USC 103(a). Applicants respectfully travers this basis for rejection.

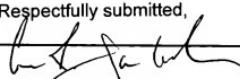
The Vercesi et al. reference makes no reference for the suitability of the compositions disclosed there for making *hollow, blow molded* articles. Accordingly, there is no motivation or suggestion to combine the references.

Neither reference expressly teaches that the aramid fibers should be limited in length to 0.1 to 8 mm, limited in diameter to less than or equal to 150 microns and limited in Canadian Standard Freeness to less than or equal to 500 ml. for making *blow molded, hollow* articles. Indeed, as previously pointed out above, Vercesi et al. contemplate using aramid fibers having diameters from 0.1 microns (0.1 mm/1000) to 800 microns (8mm/10). Thus, it is respectfully requested that this basis for rejection be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 15 has been rendered moot by its cancellation.

Reconsideration of the grounds for rejection of the present application is respectfully requested. All claims having been shown to be in a condition for allowance, an office action consistent therewith is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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